

## **GUILD WELCOMES THE SUPPORT FOR "NATIONAL RETENTION PAYMENT" FOR HOSPITAL PHARMACISTS AS RECOMMENDED BY THE PAY REVIEW BODY**

The Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists, the only body nationally recognised through, Unite the Union, as representing pharmacists in the managed sector, are very pleased that the PRB accepted there is a widespread national problem of recruitment and retention that requires a national solution. They have initially called on NHS employers and staff side to reach a workable solution before the next Review Body otherwise a formal PRB recommendation will be considered next year.

However GHP was disappointed that the robust evidence provided to the PRB was seen as insufficient on its own to lead to the introduction of a National RRP as the preferred solution. The PRB accepted that evidence initially produced in partnership with the DoH, NHS Employers and Unite, supported by the GHP Executive, showed widespread vacancies and a major differential in salary between pharmacists in their early career years in hospital compared to equivalent posts in community pharmacy. This recommendation came despite supplementary evidence by NHS Employers and professional leads at the DoH, that stated that it was inappropriate to compare work undertaken in Hospital with Community Pharmacy as they are not equivalent. Although they accepted in their evidence that hospital pharmacists may have more demanding clinical roles and at band 7 an expectation that they hold further qualifications, the access to support and advice and absence of lone working appeared to justify the pay differential

David Miller Vice President of GHP who attended the PRB oral evidence sessions with Unite commented - "Whilst welcoming the fact the PRB accepted there is a national problem and proposed a national solution it is inconceivable that without the evidence of a formal job evaluation of the knowledge, responsibilities and working conditions any statement on job non equivalence could be made. In particular we object to the statement that a national RRP was not appropriate as it could lead pay inflation and to a reduction in community pharmacy posts, inferring in our view that hospital pharmacists should through low pay support the community pharmacy infrastructure."

David Thornton Chair of Terms and Conditions for GHP stated that "The solution proposed of a retention bonus paid after 5 years service will need to be a significant sum if the service is compensate for the £10,000 annual salary differential over that initial 5 years especially when considered against the £4,000 per annum retention payment requested in the initial GHP evidence. It will also need to recognise existing as well as future postholders."

NHS employers have "promised" an increase in pre-registration pharmacists in the hospital sector and the development of new roles such as Consultant Pharmacists and Pharmacists with a Special Interest. They consider that these, rather than pay, will become more powerful motivators for future career choice.

David Miller, Guild Vice President further commented: "The profession will welcome the proposed increase in pre-registration places in hospitals as we had raised this in our previous submissions to the PRB. The commitment to the development of consultant posts and Pharmacist with a Special Interest is also welcomed. However, it is clear without retention of sufficient numbers, skills and capacity within the managed sector there is the

danger that there will be insufficient strength in the service to build any future outlined in the new white paper”

GHP (Unite) will seek an early meeting with NHS Employers to work on the suggestion of the retention bonus proposed by the Pay Review Body.

**Notes for Editors**

The Guild of Healthcare Pharmacists represents UK wide around 4,000 pharmacists including the majority of hospital pharmacists, pharmacists employed by Primary Care Trusts and pharmacists employed by other public bodies such as the Healthcare Commission, and is part of the health sector of the union Unite-Amicus section.

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